Readers write

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Body

OFFICIAL CORRUPTION

Prevent fraud, handle public works directly

Perhaps I'm being overly cynical about the honesty of high-ranking public officials, but if I were in a position to steer contracts to private companies seeking to do work for my city or county, I might wonder how many CEOs of those companies would be willing to contribute to my re-election campaign, or offer me a kickback to secure a lucrative contract.

Fortunately, there's a practical way to thwart such shenanigans: require that all public works be performed by public workers. I concede this would likely require some jurisdictions to put more workers on the payroll, with the requisite benefits, and some of the skills required would demand competitive compensation.

It seems some private companies seeking government contracts are just a middleman that may "sub out" contracts to temporary, low-paid, no-benefits hires. These companies exist to maximize profit for the CEO by providing as little value as possible in fulfilling contracts.

BIRNEY A. MONTCALM, WINSTON

CLIMATE CHANGE

Young voters support carbon-reduction bills

Mike Luckovich's cartoon showed the folly of Congress standing its ground on climate-change denial (Opinion, July 31). We should stand our ground, but in a different way --- by drafting strong legislation to protect ourselves against climate disaster.

Support for climate-change legislation is increasingly popular. A recent poll found that 80 percent of young voters like myself support President Obama's climate plan. To stay relevant, Republican members of Congress need to acknowledge climate change as a serious threat, and begin to craft bipartisan legislation.

A market-based approach, taxing carbon at the source and rebating the fees to consumers, is possible. Republicans need to act fast --- before the president, young voters and the pace of climate change leave them (as Luckovich illustrated) under water.

JAMES NORMAN, ATLANTA

REDEVELOPMENT

Sandy Springs plan banishes poor people

Sandy Springs City Councilman Tibby DeJulio points to positive byproducts from the "Gateway" project ("Project benefits Sandy Springs," Opinion, July 31).

Other cities reduce poverty by improving education, mass transit and health care, raising the minimum wage, or ensuring an ample supply of safe, affordable housing. The Sandy Springs model is to banish the poor.

Redevelopment or replacement of apartments built in the 1960s is probably a good thing. But as the city lusts after millennials, it should keep in mind that the Atlanta area ranks as one of the worst in the nation for upward mobility. Pricing poor people out of Sandy Springs might be good for property tax receipts, but it's probably not good for these families, or in our belief in providing opportunity for all to succeed.

DON MCADAM, SANDY SPRINGS

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